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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: PRT-WASIT: PROVINCIAL SADRIST SIDESTEPS HARD  
QUESTIONS

Classified By: Classified by: PRT Team Leader Robert Kagler for reasons  
1.4 (b, d).

11. (U) This is a PRT Wasit reporting cable.

12. (S//REL) Summary. On June 17, Sadrism Trend Provincial Council member Ahmed Ebrah affirmed the Salah al-Obeidi statement that Sadrism politicians in Wasit will not stand for seats in the upcoming Provincial elections under the Sadrism banner (Ref A). Ebrah implausibly blamed Al Qaeda for recent violence in Kut, including the fatal June 12 EFP attack on the convoy of a private security company working in support of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). When pressed to explain recent violence in Wasit and comment on reports that Muqtada al Sadr has ordered a new Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) unit formed specifically to attack CF, Ebrah answered indirectly, claiming that al Sadr gave an order to freeze violence but allowed "self defense." He said the upcoming ISF operations in neighboring Maysan Province would fail to nab high-value targets since the top criminal leaders had already left. End Summary.

13. (S//REL) In a brief meeting on FOB Delta, Ebrah, a regular PRT contact (Ref B-D) claimed that a brigade-sized Al Qaeda unit recently moved into the vicinity of Do'ar in Northwest Wasit (Note. Do'ar is a sparse section of desert near the Diyala border. End note.) Even more implausibly, when asked for his thoughts on recent attacks in Wasit, he first said he had no information, then, later, asserted that it "could also be Al Qaeda." (Note: There were five enemy events during the week of 8-14 June including two separate IDF attacks on CF checkpoints, a small-arms attack on a US Military Police convoy, an IED attack on al Kut SWAT (2 x KIA) and an EFP attack on a private security company's convoy (2 x CF KIA). According to CF intelligence and operation officers, it is highly unlikely that any of said incidents were committed by Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Wasit is 90 percent Shi'a and there have been no recent reports of Al Qaeda in the vicinity of al Kut. End note.) As in past meetings, Ebrah claimed groups committing violence who were branded as JAM were not in fact "true JAM"; however, when asked for specific information on such "criminal groups" he promptly changed subject, asserting that ISF leaders should be able to gather the information on the recent violence and that the most-wanted leaders will "stay outside" of Wasit.

14. (S//REL) Ebrah described the Sadrism Trend "not as a political party, but a popular movement," and said members are not obligated by political party rules. He added that "sometimes we are called foreign agents by JAM members" due to the nature of political work. Ebrah was characteristically non-committal on his personal future. He repeated his background as a former member of Fadilah, ideologically loyal to Mohammed Sadiq al Sadr, and noted Ja'afari party has a "good future," as it has "a good mix of secular and religious representatives."

15. (S//REL) Comment: Although personable and willing to discuss some subjects, Ebrah was unwilling to provide even minor details about recent attacks in al Kut. His motivation

to talk to the PRT is probably due to a perceived ability by CF to offer protection from arrest by the ISF, especially Al Kut SWAT. Ebrah does not hesitate to assert the standard Sadrist party line on most topics, including the penetration of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) by Da'wa, ISCI and the Badr Organization and its use as a political tool by the Prime Minister to attack the more popular Sadrist Trend. Ebrah is a valuable source on general provincial issues, but he has yet to provide specific information on JAM or Special Groups. End comment.  
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